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## Hubway to branch out next spring

Bikes, stations will debut in Cambridge and Somerville

November 28, 2011 | By Eric Moskowitz, Globe Staff

After recording 140,000 trips in four months, Boston's European-style bicycle-sharing system is expanding across the Charles River, with stations planned for Cambridge and Somerville after a winter hiatus.

The 60-station, 600-bike Hubway system will shut down Wednesday night and reopen in March, weather permitting, when it will quickly expand - adding 30 stations and roughly 300 bicycles beyond Boston's borders.

Cambridge officials said they hope to concentrate 20 stations in the most densely populated swaths of their city, and Somerville expects to usher in eight stations.

Back on the Boston side of the Charles, Brookline is working on two stations it hopes to open soon after the Cambridge and Somerville expansion.

"The number one question I get in my office overall is, 'When is Hubway coming to Brookline?'" said Jeff Levine, director of planning and community development in Brookline, which intends to introduce stations at Coolidge Corner and Brookline Village.

Bicycle-sharing arrived in Boston in July, greeted with a mix of excitement and skepticism. But in its first 2 1/2 months, Hubway recorded 100,000 station-to-station rides, significantly eclipsing the pace of similar systems in Minneapolis (where Nice Ride needed six months to reach that mark) and Denver (where B-cycle needed 7 1/2 months).

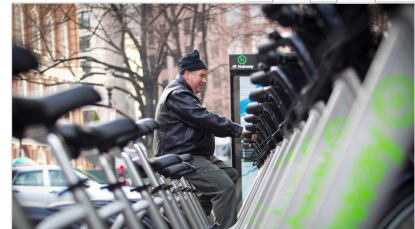
"The ridership just blew past all of our expectations," said Jessica Robertson, transportation coordinator with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, the regional organization that helped plan Hubway and paired Boston with the company that won the contract to operate the system, Alta Bicycle Share Co.

"There was a lot of buzz over the summer about all the things that could go wrong - 'there's going to be chaos on the streets' - and none of that really happened," Robertson added.

About 45 percent of the trips were taken by Hubway's 3,650 annual members, who primarily used the system for commuting and errands, with the rest recorded by tourists and riders with short-term passes.

The system - funded in part by a \$3 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration - is intended as an extension of public transit and designed for short trips. Annual members (who pay \$85) and those with one-day (\$5) and three-day (\$12) memberships can take unlimited rides but must return their bikes within 30 minutes; trips exceeding half an hour incur additional fees.

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Vince Bowden of Ohio checked out the rows of bikes that are part of Bostons... (Dina Rudick/Globe Staff)

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